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Open Space Element

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Open Space Element of the General Plan focuses on land areas which should not be intensely developed with structures and urban uses because of natural characteristics, resource production activities, recreational uses, public hazards or health impacts. Pursuant to State guidelines, the Open Space Element should include an inventory of such land areas, an analysis of their value and use, and a statement of local policies for their preservation and management.

Because of its limited size, low density and agricultural setting, the larger Gridley area has a high proportion of open areas not covered by structures. This aspect of existing development creates a semi-rural small-town character which most residents value because of the relative lack of noise, pollution, congestion, crime and other hazards usually associated with life in more urbanized areas. Farmland, parks, natural areas, setbacks and other vegetated undeveloped areas benefit residents' health and well-being by increasing individual "elbow room", air quality, recreational space, the attractiveness of the visual landscape, and awareness of natural processes. In order to maintain these benefits and amenities through the inevitable development and growth pressures of the future, the community must consciously work toward preserving open space within new development and preventing the premature and unnecessary conversion of agricultural land to urban uses.

B. SCOPE OF CONTENTS

The Open Space Element must consider the comprehensive and long-range preservation and conservation of "open-space land", which is defined as an area designated or used for one of the following categories:

(1) Open space used for the managed production of resources,

including but not limited to forest lands, rangeland, agricultural lands and areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber; areas required for recharge of ground water basins; bays, estuaries, marshes, rivers and streams which are important for the management of commercial fisheries; and areas containing major mineral deposits, including those in short supply.

(2) Open space for the preservation of natural resources,

including but not limited to areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life, including habitat for fish and wildlife species; areas required for ecologic and other scientific study purposes; rivers, streams, bays and estuaries; and coastal beaches, lakeshores, banks of rivers and streams, and watershed lands. This topic is not relevant to the City of Gridley.

(3) Open space for outdoor recreation, including but not limited to areas of

outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including access to lakeshores, beaches, and rivers and streams; and areas which serve as links between major recreation and open-space reservations, including utility easements, banks of rivers and streams, trails, and scenic highway corridors.

(4) Open space for public health and safety, including but

not limited to areas which require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions such as earthquake fault zones, unstable soil areas, flood plains, watersheds, areas presenting high fire risks, areas required for the protection of water quality and water reservoirs and areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality.

A General Plan Support Document has been prepared as background information for this Open Space Element. The Support Document includes general background information for open space and other General Plan policies, as well as specific background information for establishment of the City's Sphere of Influence, growth rate assumptions and projections, and anticipated phasing.

An Open Space Diagram is also part of the Open Space Element. The Open Space Diagram illustrates open space lands used for agricultural and recreational purposes.

C. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ELEMENTS

Because of its broad scope, the required content of the Open Space Element overlaps the subjects of at least three (3) of the other six (6) mandated General Plan elements. The subjects duplicated in State requirements for those three (3) elements are as follows:

1. Land Use Element: Addresses all "open", rural, land oriented uses covered in the Open Space Element as well as all "closed", urban, location-oriented uses.

2. Conservation Element: Addresses the use of the first two (2) types of open-space lands, areas for the preservation of natural resources and areas for managed production of resources.

3. Safety Element: Addresses use of land with significant geologic hazards or wildland fire hazards, areas considered as "open space for public health and safety", and use of earthquake fault zones, one of the listed types of open space for public health and safety.

The data, discussion and policies of these elements of the General Plan have been used as the basis for the Open Space Element. The policies and measures stated herein are thus consistent with other elements.

II. POLICY FOR OPEN SPACE LANDS

A. MANAGED PRODUCTION OF RESOURCES

The State mandates which can most affect conversion of agricultural land are those requiring that local General Plan elements address the subject and that zoning regulations be consistent with the policies of those elements. Specifically, the Conservation and Open Space Elements must both address the preservation of crop land and prime soils. All ordinances, building permits, subdivision approvals and land acquisition by local governments must conform to the adopted Open Space Element.

Goal

1. Maximize agricultural use and production on prime agricultural soils in the Gridley area.

Policies

1. To the extent applicable and appropriate, conform the agricultural land use policies of the City's Land Use Element to the County's Agricultural Element.
2. Minimize potential conflicts between agricultural uses and adjacent uses.
 - A. Utilize roads, canals, utility easements and the railroad as buffers between lands designated for agricultural and non-agricultural uses where possible.
 - B. Require setbacks and/or buffers to be incorporated into new urban development adjacent to lands designated for permanent agricultural use, as identified in the Butte County Agricultural Element.
 - C. Encourage clustering of new housing developed adjacent to the boundary between urban and agricultural uses, if the size and shape of the property proposed for development lends itself to clustering and there is no natural buffer such as a road, railroad, or ditch right-of-way.

3. Adopt a “right-to-farm” ordinance or similar mechanism that will alert new residents about the presence and importance of adjacent agricultural uses. The notice should describe potential nuisances associated with agriculture, and should advise new residents that the Mosquito and Vector Control District pursues a vigorous mosquito abatement program in the surrounding area.
4. Discourage automatic detachment of newly annexed properties from irrigation districts until such time as nonagricultural use is imminent.
5. Adopt an overlay zone that permits production agricultural activities in nonagricultural zones within the city that are compatible with other land uses.

B. RECREATION

Open space for outdoor recreation includes all outdoor areas used for the public's leisure time, relaxation, exercise and play. As urbanization takes place, the amount of land needed for various types of recreational activities increases and the amount of land available for such activities decreases. Since much of the demand is usually fulfilled by public or non-profit agencies, planning and acquiring sites for recreational use requires the community's cooperative attention to anticipating that demand.

The two basic types of recreational areas are conserved areas and developed areas. Conserved areas are valuable for natural qualities such as water bodies, terrain, vegetation, wildlife, beauty, vistas or uniqueness. The natural areas with the highest value in the Gridley area are the water bodies and related vegetation whose preservation is addressed both in the preceding section and the Conservation Element. Improvements may include access roads, parking areas, trails, signs, picnic tables or restrooms. An initial City effort in this direction has been the provision of an access road and a boat ramp on the Feather River frontage of the City sewer treatment land site on the east side of the river

south of the Oroville-Gridley Highway bridge. Site preservation and allowing public access are the most important actions that should be taken to maintain the recreational opportunities of natural recreation areas.

Although their value is more educational than recreational, areas with historically significant structures and artifacts or evidence of pre-historic settlement are classified as open space for outdoor recreation by General Plan law. Structures which the community considers unique, representative of a past period or related to important people or events should be preserved wherever possible. Preservation methods commonly used by local governments include official designation and signing of historic sites, various kinds of direct or indirect assistance to rehabilitation efforts by private owners, and acquisition for public use. Although there are several areas of older structures which provide distinctive character to the City and sense of continuity with the past, no individual structures have been identified for preservation by the community.

The public parks, playgrounds, ballfields, and similar recreational areas found in urban areas are the most developed type of open space and the most important type in many communities. Because of the large land areas involved, the costs of acquiring, developing and maintaining sites, and the wide range of community needs and possible facilities, the planning and design of developed recreational areas require a level of analysis and involvement much deeper than most General Plan Elements. The Land Use Element Diagram shows the areas presently devoted to recreational open space in the urban area.

In addition to the 14.7 acres of City parkland, the Butte County Fairgrounds located in the City provides a variety of recreational facilities and activities. Events such as the

annual County Fair, swim team competitions and dog shows are well attended and bring additional revenues into the City.

Public schools in the community also provide a source of developed open space and recreational facilities. A listing of existing open space and park locations and facilities (dated 1984) can be found in Appendix 1. Facilities include those which are under City maintenance and those which are semi-public, private/commercial, State, school district and county maintained.

The Quimby Act established by the California Legislature in 1965, allows local agencies to establish ordinances requiring residential subdivision developers to provide land or in lieu fees for park and recreation purposes. The City of Gridley established a Parkland Dedication and In Lieu Fee Ordinance in November, 1979, which was later amended in September, 1981. The Quimby Act was amended in 1982. The amendments established general standards which determine the amount of land or fees to be collected. The standards are based on the following criteria:

1. The amount of existing parkland in the jurisdiction.
2. A maximum number of acreage per 1000 population.
3. A formula based on population estimates or a formula based on dwelling units.

The Quimby Act provides for a maximum of three (3) acres per 1000 persons as the maximum standards for park dedication/fee collection unless the amount of existing neighborhood and community parkland exceeds that limit. Gridley currently has approximately 14.7 acres of parkland which includes the Gazebo and Vierra Parks. This exceeds the 3/1000 standard based on Gridley's population as reported by the State Department of Finance in 1986. Therefore, Gridley can use the higher standard of five (5) acres to 1000 persons.

The Parkland Dedication Standards for Gridley are as identified in Table 1:

TABLE 1
PARKLAND DEDICATION STANDARDS

Standard for Fees In-Lieu of Parkland Dedication:

(Dwelling units) times (average household population) times (5 acres divided by 1000 persons) times (per-acre cost of the lot) times (6/5) = in-lieu fee. The 6/5 figure represents the improvement costs for off-site improvements for development of the lot.

Standard for Parkland Dedication In-Lieu of Fees:

(Average household population) divided by (1000 persons divided by 5 acres) = minimum acreage dedication.

The City has revised the Park and Recreation Land Dedication and In-Lieu Fee Ordinance in accordance with the above standards. The collected fees are used for those facilities which the City Council, with support of the community, has determined are of the greatest recreational need.

Due to the small geographical size of the City - 1.5 square miles - the Vierra Municipal Park is considered accessible to all City residents and most citizens in the surrounding areas. Therefore, the Open Space Element does not designate more acreage for recreational purposes. It is anticipated that the Open Space Element would be amended if future large-scale subdivision were to occur in areas north, west or east of central Gridley. At the present time, park fees collected under the provisions of the Quimby Act are used for enhancement and upgrading of the Vierra Park or the downtown Nick Daddow Plaza. It is the City's policy to consider any offer of dedication of parkland in light of area need, cost of maintenance and location of facility.

Goal

1. Provide outdoor recreation areas adequate to meet local needs.

Policies

1. Encourage retention of existing areas of natural vegetation which provide significant wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities, while recognizing that safety may require some existing ditches to be piped.
2. Maintain public access to the Feather River at the City's wastewater treatment plant site to the extent possible.
3. Maintain, enhance and upgrade park facilities in the existing City parks.
4. Consider dedication of small neighborhood parks to serve future large residential development if provision of park facilities and maintenance will not significantly encumber the City's financial resources.
5. Support the activities of the Butte County Fairgrounds through promotion and cooperation and encouragement of local businesses to accommodate fair visitors.
6. Maintain and update the ordinance requiring developers' participation in providing recreation facilities as changes occur in State law.
7. Require developers to provide fees, land or facilities for recreation according to standards contained in this Element and in the enabling ordinance.

Goal

1. Retain the historical character of Gridley by preservation, identification and/or restoration of historical buildings and archaeological sites.

Policies

1. Identify and evaluate significant historical and archaeological sites and develop a program to preserve and enhance these resources.
2. Evaluate impacts of new development proposals on historical and archaeological sites.
3. Work with the local Historical Society in identification and preservation of historical buildings.
4. Research state/federal sources for restoration and rehabilitation funding available to local agencies and private property owners.

C. PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Open space for public health and safety includes all areas where development would subject either residents or the public to significant risks of damage to health or property. According to the Safety and Seismic Safety Elements adopted by both the City and the County, there are no areas within the City's boundaries subject to such risks.

There are no specific portions of the Gridley urban area which are designated as significant flood hazard zones by State agencies or the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The areas designated as "PARKS" or "PUBLIC" on the Open Space Diagram are all owned and operated by local government agencies or public utilities. Since each facility either requires extensive land for non-structural use or requires restrictions on adjacent development, they are classified herein as open space for public health and safety. The largest such facilities outside the designated urban area are the City's sewage treatment facilities on both sides of the Feather River. Another facility located

outside the urban area is the solid waste transfer station 2,000 feet east of Highway 99 on the north side of Ord Ranch Road. The potential noise problems related to this facility, the nearby electrical substation operated by Pacific Gas and Electric Co., and Manzanita School on the northeast corner of Evans Reimer Road and Larkin Road, are all addressed in the Noise Element. Finally, the large cemetery operated by the Gridley-Biggs Cemetery District on the west side of Highway 99 north of Ord Ranch Road is a necessary form of open space with the many benefits of mature trees and landscaping.

Goal

1. Restrict development which would expose residents or the public to significant natural hazards or increase health risks.

Policies

1. Preserve suitable sites for public facilities with large land needs and/or significant impacts on adjacent uses and residents.
2. Restrict development adjacent to public facilities as needed to prevent significant impacts on either.

APPENDIX
EXISTING PARK LOCATIONS AND FACILITIES

(1984)

(G = in City limits : B = County area)

- (G) 1. VIERRA PARK (Gridley Municipal Park) - south end of Washington Street. This 13.5 acre facility contains:
- Recreation Hall with kitchen facilities (approx. 2,600 square feet.)
Tot Lot: swings, slide, sandbox. Combined area totals 8,000 square feet.
- "Tadpole Territory" (approx. 16,000 square feet) -dedicated by Junior Women's Club in 1981 - innovative tot facilities for climbing and swinging, benches.
- "Birthday Picnic Ring" - dedicated by Lions Club - long picnic table and barbecue.
- Softball Field #1 - (Little League) - toilets, snack bar, lights, bleachers, telephone.
- Softball Field #2 - lights, benches, drinking fountain(no bleachers). Includes:
- 2 lighted tennis courts
 - 6 lighted horseshoe pits
 - 2 toilets
 - 8 barbecues
 - 15 picnic tables
 - 2 drinking fountains
 - Swings, sandbox, monkey bars.
- Also located in park: California and Oregon Railroad Depot (historical), Boy Scouts of America building, storage facilities.
- (G) 2a. SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD PARK #1 - (Nick Daddow Plaza)
-Virginia Street between Hazel and Sycamore Streets. Covered gazebo, drinking fountain, 6 benches.
- 2b. SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD PARK #2 - Washington Street between Sycamore and Magnolia Streets. No improvements other than sprinkling system.
- (Combined total acreage approximately 4 acres).
- (B) 3. FEATHER RIVER BOAT RAMP - east side of Feather River adjacent to City sewage plant. Dirt parking area, paved ramp for boat launching.

EXISTING SCHOOL RECREATION FACILITIES

(1984)

(G = In City Limits : B = in County areas)

- (G) 1. MCKINLEY SCHOOL - 1045 Sycamore Street (grades K, 1 and 2)
Playground equipment: merry-go-round, 2 slides, rings, monkey bars, bangball court, tetherball court, 2 small baseball fields.
- (G) 2. WILSON SCHOOL - 406 Magnolia Street (grades 3, 4, and 5)
Playing field, 2 small baseball diamonds used by Little Leaguers for practice field.

Playground equipment: rings, merry-go-round, basketball hoops, sidewalk games, i.e., hopscotch and four-square.

Library - available for non-school use by arrangement and fee.
- (G) 3. SYCAMORE SCHOOL - 1125 Sycamore Street (grades 6, 7, and 8)
Playing field with perimeter track, soccer field, baseball diamond used by adult baseball leagues for practice field during non-school hours, outdoor basketball court, 2 handball courts.

Gymnasium - basketball, volley ball, tumbling. Available for use by adult athletic groups by arrangement and fee.

Library - available to civic and service groups for meetings and conferences by arrangement and fee.

Multi-purpose room/cafeteria - available for meetings, etc.

Butte College holds night school classes in physical fitness, i.e., aerobic dancing and exercise.
- (G) 4. GRIDLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL - 300 Spruce Street (grades 9, 10, 11 and 12)

1 football field - available for special events other than school activities by arrangement and fee.

1 baseball field - available for non-school use by arrangement and fee.

2 lighted tennis courts - open to public during non- school hours.

Cinder track.

Library - available for meetings, conferences, art or photography shows, etc., by arrangement and fee.

Classrooms are used for Butte College night school classes and/or meetings held by youth, civic or service groups by arrangement and fee.

- (B) 5. MANZANITA SCHOOL - Larkin and E. Evans-Reimer Roads (grades 1 through 8)

EXISTING SEMI-PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND COMMERCIAL
RECREATION FACILITIES

(1984)

(G = in City limits : B = in County area : A = in 50 mile area)

- (B) 1. RACQUET RANCH - Chambers Lane - Private Tennis Club
2 lighted tennis courts, patio and chairs. Limited memberships for sale as vacancies allow.

- (G) 2. FAMILY FITNESS CENTER - 1010 Sycamore Street - Commercial Health Center
Universal weight equipment, stationary bicycles, jacuzzi, sauna, 2 racquetball courts, aerobic and exercise classes.

- (G) 3. SOCIAL HALLS available for public use:
Moose Lodge, Holy Trinity Association Hall, Gridley Women's Club, Grange Hall.

- (A) 4. TABLE MOUNTAIN GOLF COURSE - Oroville Area
18 hole public golf course, driving range, putting greens, lessons.

- (A) 5. PLUMAS LAKE GOLF COURSE - Marysville area
18 hole public golf course, driving range, putting greens, lessons, club house with kitchen facilities available for public use.

- (A) 6. SKATING RINK - Marysville.

- (A) 7. BOWLING ALLEY - Yuba City and Oroville

- (G) 8. SOCIAL HALLS AND RECREATION FACILITIES are provided by some churches (Private)

- (G) 9. THEATER - 660 Kentucky Street - Commercial
Hispanic and English speaking films.

- (G) 10. HUNTER SAFETY TRAINING COURSES sponsored by Moose Lodge

STATE AND COUNTY RECREATION FACILITIES

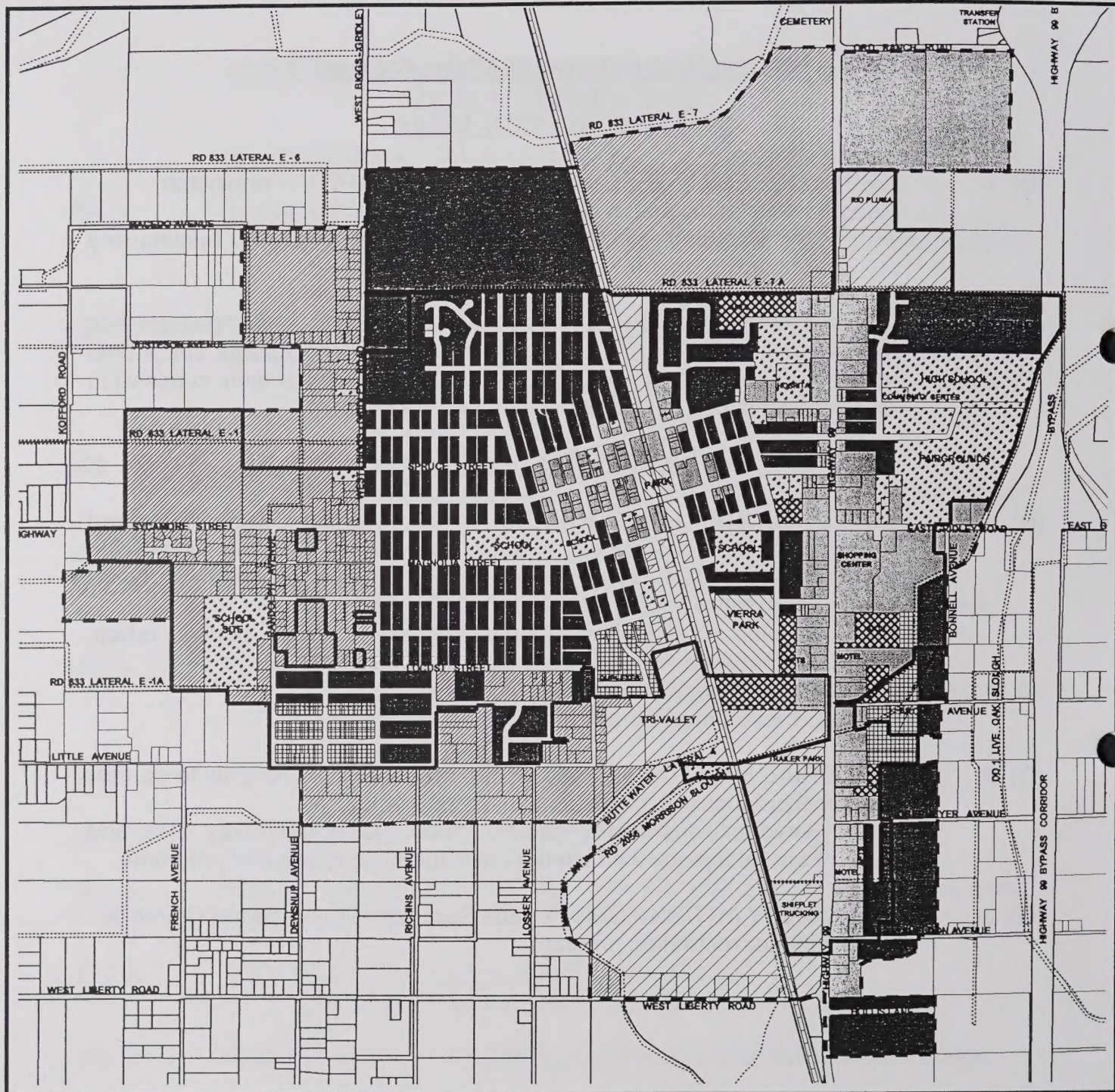
(1984)

STATE RECREATION AREAS

- (B) 1. GREY LODGE WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT AREA - Pennington
Road 8 miles southwest of Gridley.
Bird watching, sightseeing, field trials, photography, hunting and fishing.
- (B) 2. LAKE OROVILLE RECREATION AREA - California State and privately-run recreational areas, marinas for berthing, boating and fishing, some boat rentals, picnic locations, swimming, trails, visitor center at dam, concession and gift shops, limited overnight camping.

COUNTY RECREATION AREAS

- (G) 1. BUTTE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS - 199 E. Hazel Street - Standard "Olympic" swimming pool open to public for seasonal use, some swimming programs, annual County fair, circuses, expositions, "Kiwi Festival", horse shows and related activities.
Buildings and facilities can be rented for private parties, rallies, camping spaces.
2 lighted baseball fields;
3 unlighted fields.
- (G) 2. MEMORIAL HALL - 249 Sycamore Street - Available for private parties, theatrical productions, rallies, antique shows and sales.
Senior citizens hold bi-monthly dances. Used by County, State and Federal agencies on interim basis for office space and programs.
- (G) 3. COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY - 209 Sycamore Street - Senior Citizen bus trips, summer recreation program.



CITY OF GRIDLEY

OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

OPEN SPACE DIAGRAM

- AGRICULTURAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- PARKS
- PUBLIC

- RESIDENTIAL, Suburban (to 3 homes/ac)
- RESIDENTIAL, Low Density (to 4 homes/ac)
- RESIDENTIAL, Medium Density (to 8 homes/ac)
- RESIDENTIAL, High Density (to 15 homes/ac)

- BOUNDARY OF CITY LIMITS
- BOUNDARY OF SPHERE
- DITCHES / EASEMENTS

0 500 1000 2000



FIGURE 1

June 24, 2000

U.C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES



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